Industry-Government Liaison in the Development of Breaded Shrimp Grade Standards

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PERHAPS A MORE DESCRIPTIVE TITLE for this paper would be "Cooperation and Compromise—the Inside Story of the Development of Voluntary Grade Standards for Breaded Shrimp." Except for the commendable cooperation between the members of industry and the government technologists working on standards, there would be nothing worth reporting today. Fortunately, all parties concerned were willing to compromise on details, and as a result there is now a proposed set of standards which will be workable and useful.

Since its inception in January 1955, the prime function of the Technology Division of the National Fisheries Institute has been to foster understanding and cooperation within the industry, and between government and industry. Working under a Saltonstall-Kennedy contract with the Bureau of Commercial Fisheries, the N.F.I. technologists have served as liaison agents in a quality improvement program, which includes the development of voluntary grade standards desired by the industry.

In 1953 the breaded shrimp industry made the first attempt to improve its products and its marketing through voluntary standards. A majority of the producers agreed to a set of tentative industry standards for the maximum amounts of breading to be permitted. These standards, however, were not universally accepted nor implemented. This first attempt, therefore, proved ineffectual.

Two years later at a meeting of shrimp breaders, during the N.F.I. convention at New Orleans, it was again agreed that quality and marketing improvements were seriously needed. The committee of breaders asked the N.F.I. Technology Division to canvass the industry and ascertain the desirability and practicability of some type of voluntary grade standards. Accordingly, the entire breaded shrimp industry was first questioned by mail. Then three open meetings were arranged for June and July, 1955. At these meetings in Miami Beach, Houston and Los Angeles the advantages and disadvantages of various possible standards were reviewed. The quality factors which should be considered in any standards were discussed. However, the producers postponed any specific recommendations until they could see a sample standard. At each of the three meetings it was unanimously requested that such a sample be prepared for serious review by the entire industry.

In order to fulfill this request our Division turned to Fish and Wildlife Service technologists for assistance. Together we prepared a working draft of possible standards for grading breaded shrimp. This draft was styled after voluntary grade standards being employed satisfactorily for several food products by the Agricultural Marketing Service. The definitions and other details in the draft were based on available laboratory data and on the quality factor suggestions made at the summer industry meetings.

Those industry meetings and that working draft were the beginnings of a series of both meetings and drafts. There have been sixteen public meetings called to review and discuss breaded shrimp standards. The provisional set of

standards reviewed in November, 1957 by the industry is at least the twelfth draft. Each meeting and each draft has represented significant progress towards a practical and well understood set of standards.

A comparison of the latest draft with the early draft reveals tremendous improvements in simplicity, clarity and practicality. Contributions to these improvements came from several of those concerned with the development of the standards. For example, the simple style of the present version is primarily the result of suggestions made by members of a special industry technologists' committee. The scoring procedures are based mainly on laboratory investigations conducted during the last three years by College Park technologists of the Bureau of Commercial Fisheries. Many refinements and modifications were suggested by the Breaded Shrimp Evaluation Programs held in connection with the last seven annual conventions of the National Fisheries Institute. A better understanding of the proposed standards and also a few more refinements resulted from the special evaluation seminars and demonstrations conducted this past summer.

The basic concepts of the first and last drafts are essentially the same. The grading procedures have been altered moderately, and these procedures have been considerably more refined and more clearly defined. Reading through the twelve drafts in chronological order, one can see adjustments which recognized normal processing and marketing practices and problems. Some grading requirements have been relaxed, others have been made more strict. These changes have been dictated by the results of laboratory studies and plant experience. The present draft promises to accomplish effectively the basic goal of all standards: it will differentiate reliably, the good, the fair and the poor products. It should therefore tend to encourage quality improvements and marketing improvements.

The Relationship of Residual Oil and Menhaden Fish Meal Quality

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FISH MEAL QUALITY has been a controversial subject for a number of years and continues to be the object of intensive research. Processing variables such as time and temperature in cooking, pressing, drying time and temperature and curing methods are being studied by the Fish and Wildlife Service in order to determine what relationship they have to the nutritive value of the meal. Similar and additional studies are also being conducted within the menhaden industry.

Curing studies conducted by personnel of New Jersey Menhaden Products have resulted in the use of antioxidants to eliminate the necessity for heat curing menhaden meal. This technique is rapidly being adopted by fish meal producers wherever heat curing presents a production and handling problem. Initial studies with antioxidants such as diphenylparaphenylenediamine (DPPD) and butylated hydroxy toluene (BHT) indicated that effective protection